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ABSTRACT

This Personalized Activity Kit is designed to provide an overview of the major factors that must be considered in improving existing school programs as well as in initiating needed programs. The factors reviewed here are student objectives, districtwide program structure/program objectives, school building philosophy/staff objectives, staff develcpment, the teaching-learning environment, curriculum studies, and program-oriented budgeting. (Author/IRT)

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ED141915

A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS KIT

PAK #3.0 - PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT/MODIFICATION--AN OVERVIEW

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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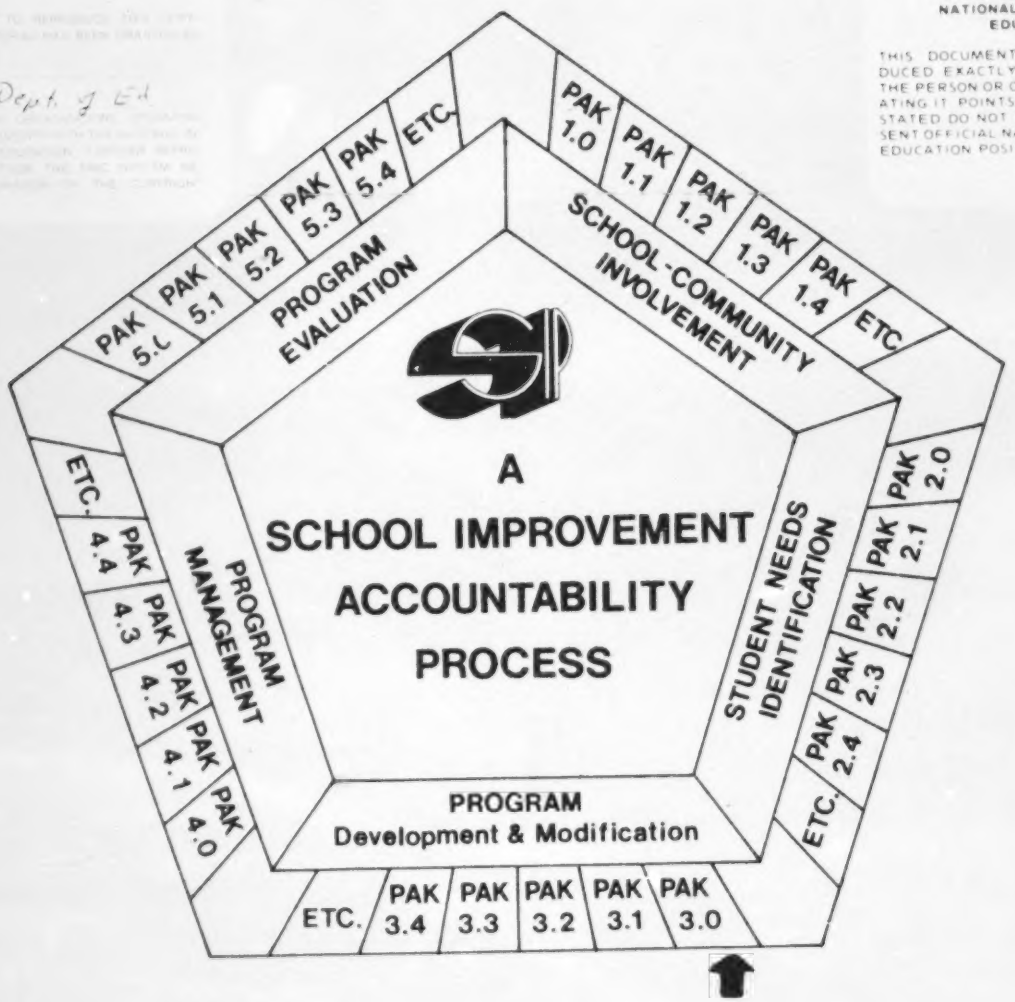

Personalized Activity Kit (PAK) for use as:

- Individualized Study Guide
- Small Group Study Guide
- Workshop Facilitator's Guide

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Calvin M. Frazier, Commissioner of Education

EA 009 727

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A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS KIT

PAK #3.0 - Program Development/Modification--An Overview

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you may wish to make about improving
the content, activities, or format.

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PAK #3.0

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT/MODIFICATION--AN OVERVIEW

Purpose:

This PAK is designed to provide an understanding of the major factors which must be considered in improving existing school programs as well as initiating needed programs and discarding those which no longer are relevant to student needs. These factors will be reviewed briefly in this Overview and treated in greater detail in the following minipaks in Series #3. They are:

3.1 Writing Student Objectives

3.2 Developing Districtwide Program Structure/ Writing Program Objectives

3.3 Developing an Operational School Building Philosophy/Writing Staff Objectives

3.4 Staff Development: A Process for Renewal

3.5 Dimensions of the Teaching-Learning Environment

3.6 Conducting an Analytical Curriculum Study (ACS)

3.7 Program-Oriented Budgeting

An Introduction:

A major educational purpose of any school/community would be to provide a teaching-learning environment within which all students might have access to experiences that meet their individual, unique educational needs. That purpose essentially has been confirmed in the writing of the Colorado Educational Accountability Act of 1971: "....to define and measure quality in education, and thus to help the public schools of Colorado to achieve such quality and expand the life opportunities and options of the students of this state...."

To accomplish the above purpose, let us assume that two important steps already have been taken by a school district. These are:

1. *Districtwide student goals have been stated. These broad statements of direction and purpose describe what the school/community believes students "ought to learn," and they therefore provide a basis for the continuing determination of student needs. (See PAK Series #2)*

2. *A student needs identification process has been initiated. "Fact-finding and needs analysis procedures" have been carried out through the leadership of the school district's advisory accountability committee. These activities have been useful in pinpointing critical student needs. (See PAK Series #2)*

PAK #3.0

In a real sense, a school district never "completes" the steps identified above, for they are related in an ongoing, continuing, process. Step 2, particularly, may be viewed as a stage to be reassessed each school year in terms of possible new student needs and school/community purposes not previously identified. While this would not constitute a total needs assessment, it would mean being responsive or alert to changes that may have occurred, or to shifting priorities. But having given attention to these steps, it is now possible to examine systematically our existing school programs to determine whether they are indeed satisfactorily improving the life opportunities and options for students within the district, and if not, to establish real, identified student needs.

PAK #3.1

Writing Student Objectives

Student objectives may be described as statements of desired student outcomes that are both observable and measurable. It is a major task of the professional staff (based upon previous identification of student needs) to determine the skills, valuing behaviors, knowledge, and problem-finding/solving abilities which will contribute to the intellectual, emotional, and physical development of every learner. Each objective should provide one or more evidences of attainment, confirming that the objective has been achieved. Objectives are usually written first on a district-wide basis, in order to assure educationally sound sequencing, K-12. Then they are put into practical application at the appropriate building level. District-wide student objectives might include any of the following examples:

The student will demonstrate:

- *The ability to collect and organize data*
- *An active interest in literature*
- *The ability to listen effectively*
- *The ability to apply problem-solving techniques*
- *The ability to do productive, creative thinking*
- *A positive self-concept*

PAK #3.2

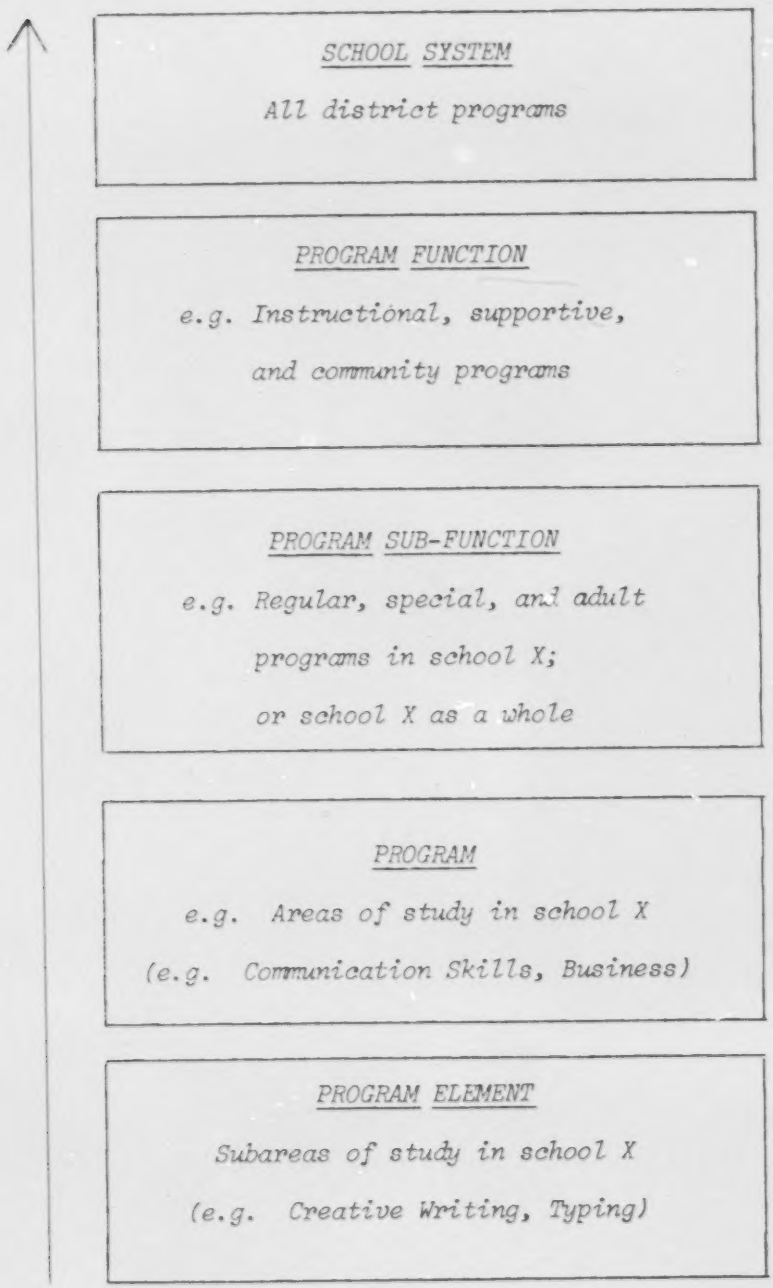
The Development of a School District Program Structure to Establish Resource Needs/Writing Program Objectives:

The program structure is that set of categories which expresses in varying levels of detail the purposes of programs and shows how they and their purposes relate to each other and to the student goals of the school district.

It provides a basis for more effective planning, scheduling, choices among alternatives, and communication than can be expected of traditional categories of accounting. Program structure is primarily non-financial in nature.

Following is one way of describing different program levels within a school district program structure.

PROGRAM LEVELS



PAK #3.2

Writing Program Objectives:

All program level objectives for students are statements of measurable, desired outcomes, which include evidence of attainment for a given time period. Further, they describe the performance of those outcomes for groups, rather than for an individual student.

For example:

- *all students will. . .*
- *graduating seniors will. . .*
- *sixth grade students will. . .*
- *students K-4 will. . .*

Essentially, these objectives should communicate three pieces of information:

1. What is the objective? (The intended outcome)
2. What particular group of students is to accomplish the objective?
3. What evidence(s) of attainment will confirm that the objective has been accomplished?

For example, consider the following student objective which could be written at the program element level within a given program structure.

Objective: All graduating students should demonstrate understanding of their basic political rights and responsibilities under the Constitution of the United States.

Evidence of Attainment: In 1974, based upon the results of teacher constructed tests, 80 percent of the graduating students satisfactorily demonstrated the ability to apply the Bill of Rights to questions regarding political rights and responsibilities under the United States Constitution.

Note: After an analysis of these results, if the school district citizens believed that 80 percent of the students did not represent a sufficient number in the achievement of this objective, then steps could be taken to determine alternative ways to improve this area of study within the curriculum.

The Development of a School Building Operational Philosophy:

Once student goals and objectives have been established on a district-wide and building basis, and a district program structure has been identified, the process of program development/modification may be effectively engaged within each school building. It is important for an entire building faculty, administration, and support staff to reach consensus on a general statement of building philosophy consistent with the district's student goals and objectives. This statement of operating philosophy should reflect the total staff's commitment to a desirable learning "climate" for the building, as well as their beliefs about how best to assist learners in meeting their educational needs.

For example:

- Our students should have continuing access to experiences that confirm and nurture their positive sense of worth as a person.
- Human beings grow intellectually, psychologically, and physically at different rates; therefore, we should enable each student to learn at his own pace, seeking always to engage his intrinsic interests and abilities.
- Students in our building continually need to be encouraged in the use of their critical and creative thinking--feeling abilities.
- Our students need to have increasing opportunities to do productive, self-directed learning; to be participants in decision-making regarding their school activities.
- Our skills as professionals may be employed most effectively when we work cooperatively as an instructional team to meet the educational needs of our students.

These value statements should have direct implications for what happens to students in their day-to-day activities at school. Educational programs in each school need to reflect the values that have been generated through the previously described process of school/community involvement and the commitment of school board, administration, and professional staff within the school district.

The Writing of Staff Objectives

Staff objectives are specific statements of planned outcomes, the achievement of which is both observable and measurable. They should contain the following pieces of information:

A. *Description of the objective (the intended outcome)*

B. *Expected evidence of attainment*

C. *Time or date of expected completion*

D. *Source of approval, and funding or other constraints*

These objectives represent what staff members will do to facilitate the attainment of student goals and objectives. For this reason, staff objectives are frequently referred to as "enabling" objectives. These objectives may be written by any officially designated school district personnel whose services contribute directly or indirectly to the educational growth of learners and the successful functioning of school district programs. These would include teachers and administrators, school board members, and support staff. Objectives may be written by an individual or by groups of individuals (e.g., an entire school staff), depending upon the nature and purpose of the objective. These objectives should be consistent with school district student goals and objectives, and should effectively communicate the building philosophy. Usually, staff objectives may be grouped into the following categories:

- Personal/Professional Growth: *To describe an effort to increase one's professional competency by acquiring new skills or knowledge; to set objectives for personal growth, the results of which may be directly related to improving the learning environment for students.*

- Program Innovation: *To describe an effort to initiate planned change in the curriculum or to implement improved management and/or supporting services in order to meet identified learner needs.*

- Staff Relationships: *To describe an individual or collective effort to improve the functioning of staff members in their professional relationships with students, parents and with each other. (e.g. communications, team building skills, etc.)*

  Example:

  Situation:

  School district X has been involved in a district-wide process of educational planning. As one important aspect of that process, the district professional staff has been charged by the Board to develop an objective-referenced curriculum. Subsequently, planning meetings are held by teachers to develop objectives for all curriculum areas. The following objective typifies one written by the district's social science teachers.

  Staff Objective:

  The school district social science teachers will prepare a priority list of student objectives based upon identified student needs. The list will be presented for the approval of the Board of Education no later than _____ (date).

Staff Development - A Process for Renewal

The professional and support staff of any school district must be regarded as a vital force in the success of any systematic, long-range school improvement effort. In planning for the development or modification of school programs, it is essential to have an understanding of a school's "climate"; that is, the manner in which it is organized and is able to function in bringing about productive, satisfying learning for students.
For example:

- *To what extent does the staff work cooperatively in carrying out the existing instructional programs?*
- *Are staff members involved in a continuing program of personal and professional growth in order to improve the learning environment for students?*
- *What are the characteristics of a "healthy" school?*
- *How does a school become and remain a healthy organization?*
- *How does a school develop the ability to become both self-correcting and self-renewing in order to cope adequately over long periods of time?*
- *Under what conditions may administrators and teachers become more receptive to worthwhile innovations and become more willing to work together in meeting and resolving school problems?*

The answers to these questions largely hinge on the degree to which the entire staff is able to demonstrate the necessary skills and behaviors which contribute to a healthy school organization. These may include the following:

- Commitment to the school district's student goals and objectives.
- Skills In:

  Interpersonal communication and problem-solving

  Conflict resolution

  Decision-making

  Creative thinking

  Values clarification

  Instructional management

Therefore, within our long-range planning, it is important to plan, to budget for an ongoing program of staff development which in the long run will provide a vital contribution to the entire district's school improvement process.

PAK #3.5

Dimensions of the Teaching-Learning Environment:

In our planning for the continued improvement of school programs, it is useful to examine the several major dimensions or "pieces" that describe a teaching-learning environment. Frequently in the past our educational planning has been fragmented, and one or more "improvements" have been made (e.g. changes in scheduling, staffing patterns, materials usage, etc.) without considering their relationship to or their impact upon other unchanged aspects of the total learning environment. To recognize, therefore, that all dimensions of the learning environment are interrelated is to anticipate in the planning stage how one change perhaps will or will not contribute to the larger whole.

We have already stated the importance of determining district-wide student outcomes (objectives); that is, what the school/community believes to be important for its students to learn. Now we are ready to take a closer look at the environment(s) in which that learning may take place most productively.

The following represent several of the dimensions to be considered:

- *Student level of development and learning style*
- *Curricula*
- *Teacher role(s)*
- *Learning Space(s)*
- *Learning Time(s)*

Each of the above-mentioned dimensions should be dealt with in the sequence noted. That is, we should begin our efforts to meet student needs by considering the uniqueness of each student in terms of his total development and learning style and then provide curricula flexible enough to suit these differences. Determinations of teacher role(s), learning space and learning time would follow accordingly. Through the cooperation and the creative thinking of all school building personnel and involved parents, it is possible to establish school programs in which these dimensions are dealt with in a more effective sequence. Often such improvements require little additional monies, merely the imagination and the willingness of staff members and parents to try a different approach and apply curricula, learning space and learning time in ways that will accomplish the student objectives that have been set.

PAK #3.6

Conducting an Analytical Curriculum Study:

An Analytical Curriculum Study is a process that the educational planner can follow to make better predictions about the success of different alternatives for improving some instructional area.

PAK #3.6

Essentially, then, the educational planner is engaging in a process of problem-solving and decision-making. The ACS (Analytical Curriculum Study) is an approach that is designed to make educational problem-solving and decision-making a more systematic and beneficial process.

Typically, the educational planner identifies some segment of the district's instructional program that is in need of improvement. Given the identification of the "problem" area, the educational planner next decides: "What can we do to aid the instructional program in this area?" Next, the planner says, "I think we should try these things..." "These things" might be any number of actions such as: Add more staff; purchase more instructional materials and educational hardware; rearrange the curriculum schedule; devise a remedial program; bring in a consultant specializing in the particular subject matter, etc.

The ACS procedure is an attempt to aid the planner (educational problem solver/decision maker) in breaking out of the "Let's try XYZ on our problem and see if it works" mode. The ACS is a tool that allows the planner to make better predictions about the success of a given instructional program change before an improvement program is actually implemented.

As a process, ACS is a tool. Even the best tools are of little value if they aren't used. Tools are of little value unless they are used properly. People do work, tools don't.

The ACS Minipak focuses more precisely on what ACS is, and how it is performed. In presenting the basic ACS concepts, we decided to begin at the end. That is, the results of an ACS, or what it all means, are discussed before you are told how these results are obtained.

Our rationale: If you know where you are going, and why, then you are more likely to want to know how to get there.

PAK #3.7

Program-Oriented Budgeting:

Rationale: The function of program-oriented budgeting is to insure that school board members and school district personnel, in their deliberations and decisions about budgeting matters, develop a program-oriented budget rather than a budget-oriented program.

Basic Concepts: The following four basic concepts relate program-oriented budgeting to the overall budgeting process:

1. *Plan: Improve statement of goals and write student, staff and program objectives.*

Planning begins with the refinement of district goals for students and with the identification of initial student needs relative to the established goals. Once the goals and needs have been developed, the next step is to write student, staff, and program objectives. The objectives state what the student is to do, what the staff is to do, and what the program (yet to be decided) is to accomplish.

2. Program: *Develop alternative new program or proposed methods for improving existing programs--citing anticipated results and anticipated costs in achieving the desired objectives.*

Program structure should clearly show the relationship between student goals and objectives in a hierarchy where anticipated costs/results and actual costs/results can be determined, aggregated, and evaluated in increasingly larger units.

3. Budget/Accounting: *Analyze the actual costs-and-results of current programs in terms of the district's goals and objectives, and relate actual costs/results to anticipated costs-and-results of alternative new programs or changes of methods.*

It is the responsibility of the business offices to allocate funds based on the established educational priorities. When proposed programs or changes of methods cannot be afforded, they will have to be reworked by the educational program planners, and other alternatives will have to be reappraised. Programs related to low priority goals and objectives may have to be dropped. The decisions are not easy. However, a systematic, analytic procedure for relating priorities of student goals and objectives to priorities of anticipated cost-effective programs do facilitate program-oriented budgeting rather than budget-oriented programming. Such a procedure is sensitive, at every step of the process, to the educational needs of the community.

4. Evaluate: *Modify programs and methods based on relating actual results to actual costs.*

After a program has been in operation for a period of time sufficiently long enough to get results, educational results can be related to costs. Value judgments can then be made as to whether or not educational programs and methods are doing what they were designed to do at justifiable costs. This is the point where program strengths and weaknesses can be identified. Using this information as a basis for planning completes one cycle of program-oriented budgeting and starts another.

SUMMARY

The development and/or the modification of school programs represents a pivotal stage within the entire school improvement process. It is that point at which the fruits of thoughtful, systematic planning may be realized through worthwhile action plans at the building level. Such action plans for school improvement must take into consideration the following major factors:

- The identification and practical use of district-wide student and program objectives applied at the appropriate building level.
- The development of a district-wide program structure within which program level objectives may be written.
- The development of an operating philosophy at the building level which states the staff's beliefs about teaching and learning and promotes the writing of appropriate staff objectives to reflect those values and identified student needs.
- The development of an ongoing process for professional improvement at the building level; providing ways for staff members to learn to work together more effectively and to enjoy experiences which contribute to their personal and professional growth.
- The application of a systematic approach to curriculum improvement, taking into consideration the several key dimensions of the teaching-learning environment that contribute to productive student learning.
- The application of a program-oriented budgeting approach through which the district may more effectively analyze the actual costs/results of current programs in terms of the district's goals and objectives and relate actual costs/results to anticipated costs/results of alternative new programs or changes in methods.

PAK #3.0

EXERCISE

Appraising Where We've Been and Looking Ahead to Where We're Going

In considering the important phase of school program development and/or modification, it may be helpful to pause in order to review the steps already taken and then also to look ahead to the important steps which remain to be accomplished within our total process of school improvement. While it is very important to keep clearly in mind the results we are seeking to achieve (meeting the educational needs of students), it is also important to review periodically the procedures being used to enable those results to be achieved. By looking critically at the ways in which our school improvement process has been employed, we may be able to identify better ways to get the job done.

DIRECTIONS: The following sequence of activities is suggested and may be modified at your discretion.

15 min.	Have meeting or workshop participants individually complete the checklist on the accompanying pages applying the suggested rating procedure.
30 min.	Invite participants to share their individual responses on the checklist in small groups (4-6 members). Suggest that small groups appraise the degree of agreement among themselves regarding the various items, and if possible, to revise their responses based upon new evidence provided by their group members. Tally and total small group responses for checklist items.
15 min.	Collect small group tabulations and use butcher paper or overhead projector to report each small group's totals for the checklist items under consideration.
30 min.	Based upon the checklist results presented, it may be useful to discuss those Criteria Statements within which the greatest discrepancies exist. If there are substantial disagreements among members, particularly in Statements #1 and #2 (which one would imagine to have already been dealt with within the planning process), then efforts may be made to close the communication gap which possibly exists. If those steps in Statements #1 and #2 have not been dealt with satisfactorily within the district's process for school improvement, attention may need to be given to them in order to be able to move ahead more effectively into program improvement.

Total Time: Approximately 1-1/2 hours.

PAK #3.0

A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS SURVEY*

This survey is intended to be used by school districts in determining their current status in relationship to the criteria. The survey can be used as a guide to analyze a district in relation to a complete accountability or renewal cycle. The survey can also be used as a framework for measuring progress towards the completion of various elements of a planning, budgeting, and evaluation system.

Note: This checklist may be used at the building level, district administration level, or with school/community Educational Improvement Committees.

In the response column enter "Y" for yes and adequate, "YI" for yes but inadequate, and "N" for no.

Criteria Statement 1 - Goals

1. Do educational goals for the school district exist in written form? _____
2. Is there evidence that public(s), faculty, and students accept and support these goals? _____
3. Does a system for periodically reviewing the educational goals exist? _____
4. Do procedures exist which guide the periodic review of educational goals? _____
5. Do the educational goals state expected student outcomes? _____

Criteria Statement 2 - Needs Assessment

1. Has the school district conducted district-wide student needs assessment in relation to established educational goals? _____
2. Does a system and defined procedures exist for periodically assessing student needs district-wide? _____
3. Is student needs identification information systematically collected and compiled? _____
4. Is student needs identification information collected as a part of a district-wide educational information system? _____
5. Do needs identification efforts take into account differences among the populations of the community such as socio-economic, ethnic and other demographic factors? _____

Criteria Statement 3 - Educational Objectives

1. Does the district have student objectives derived from the district-wide educational goals? _____
2. Are these student objectives used as the basis for curriculum development? _____
3. Are these student objectives used for educational program planning? _____
4. Does a system and procedures exist for developing objectives and gaining their approval? _____

PAK #3.0

Criteria Statement 4 - Program Plans

1. Does the district have written program plans for its educational efforts based upon the student objectives? ____
2. Do these plans include the definition of staff objectives, activities, evaluation measures, and time frame for accomplishment? ____
3. Do the plans define the role and function of various units within the district and the estimated resources required to achieve program objectives? ____

Criteria Statement 5 - Program Budget

1. Does the school district develop a district-wide program budget? ____
2. Does the school district develop a program budget for some of its educational programs? ____

Criteria Statement 6 - Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Does the school district have specific procedures through which to check or keep track of its educational operations? ____
2. Does the school district have a means for evaluating the effectiveness of its programs? (In terms of student outcomes and process) ____
3. Does the district have the capability to relate program activities and student outcomes to costs? ____
4. Do program plans contain evaluation designs? ____

Criteria Statement 7 - Information System

1. Does the district have a central educational information system which includes information about student needs? ____
2. Does the information system include program objectives, estimated costs, student evaluation information, and actual costs? ____
3. Does the district utilize Handbook II Revised? (payroll, cost accounting and program accounting) ____

Criteria Statement 8 - Annual & Multi-Year Planning, Budgeting, & Evaluation Cycle

1. Does the district have defined in written form the role and function of various school personnel in the annual and multi-year planning, budgeting, and evaluation cycle? ____
2. Does the school district have defined in writing a general time frame and schedule of events for the development, review, and approval of annual program plans and budgets? ____
3. Does the school district have defined in writing a general time frame and schedule of events for the development, review, and approval of multi-year program plans and budgets? ____

*This survey was adapted from Planning, Budgeting and Evaluation (Texas Education Agency, 1975)

District Planning & Accountability Services
Colorado Department of Education
April 1975

PAK #_____
(Please fill in)

PAK CRITIQUE FORM

Please give your assessment and comments on the following:

PROGRAM ELEMENT	OUT-STANDING	VERY GOOD	FAIR	POOR	VERY POOR	COMMENTS
1. The quality & relevance of the subject matter.						
2. The appropriateness and usefulness of the instructional materials.						
3. The timing or sequencing of the various items presented.						
4. The directing and assistance given on the exercise.						

Other comments or suggestions for improving this PAK:

If this PAK was used as part of a WORKSHOP training session, then please also complete the following:

PROGRAM ELEMENT	OUT-STANDING	VERY GOOD	FAIR	POOR	VERY POOR	COMMENTS
5. The deployment, grouping or planned interaction of the participants						
6. The productivity and/or usefulness of the individual work session(s).						
7. The comments or assistance given to you on your selected problem.						